LACK OF COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN
GJ04-043

Reason for the Report

The 2001-2002 Grand Jury with the Board of Supervisors approval, at a cost of about $12,325, contracted for an independent management audit which found the county did not have a long range strategic plan. The Board of Supervisors agreed with the findings and responded that the recommendations would be "implemented in the future." **This Grand Jury found that no strategic plan has been started or implemented to date.**

Scope of the Investigation

People Interviewed
- The Chief Administrative Officer
- The County Auditor

Documents Reviewed
- The 2001-2002 Grand Jury Report and Responses by the Board of Supervisors including the report of the independent management audit titled "Analysis of El Dorado County's Budget Process" dated May, 2002.
- The Grand Jury Reports for the two subsequent years, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.
- The County Budgets for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.

Background

As Satchel Paige said years ago, "If you don't know where you want to go, you may wind up some place else." If the county does not have a strategic plan, what the county will become may not be what the citizens want it to be.

The 2002-2003 Grand Jury report on page 18 describes a strategic plan in these terms:

"Many organizations, public and private, engage in a strategic planning process to accomplish the following:
1. Confirm and refine the mission statement of the organization with which all employees and stakeholders agree.
2. Establish a vision for the future of the organization
3. Develop goals, objectives and action plans to ensure accomplishment of the mission and vision.
4. Establish a mechanism for measuring and reporting on actual organization performance relative to the goals, objectives and action plan.

"Generally, strategic plans are multi-year in nature with a five year horizon being fairly typical. A strategic planning process for El Dorado County should include the following steps:

- Assessing the current state of County operations including resources available and strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
- Identifying likely future trends that will affect the County (e.g., population growth in El Dorado and neighboring counties, changes in State funding formulas, likely incorporation of cities, impacts of new technology, etc.)
- Identifying likely future service needs and resources available to meet those demands (i.e., likely revenue streams).
- Establishing service goals and objectives consistent with the mission and vision for the future.
- Establishing a system for measuring the County's success in meeting the stated goals and objectives."

Facts

1. The CAO stated the county has not started to implement a strategic plan.
2. The CAO has had experience in developing and implementing strategic plans in other governmental environments and knows the importance of them.
3. The County Auditor states the plan would be difficult to develop and implement due to the unreliability of state and federal funding for some departments. A strategic plan could by preemptive planning soften the effects of future shortfalls.
4. Unstable funding for county employee pensions and health care after retirement, the poor capital expenditures planning, and the recent curtailment of some of the county libraries are examples of problems that develop due to lack of a long-term strategic plan.
5. The recently voter-approved County General Plan is a planning and land use document and is not a long-term strategic plan.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATOINS

1a. **Finding:** The Board of Supervisors agreed in 2003 that a long-term strategic plan would be beneficial to the county, **but has taken no action to implement one**.

    1b. **Recommendation:** The Board of Supervisors should take the necessary action to develop and implement a long-term strategic plan as described in the 2002-2003 grand jury report.

A response by the Board of Supervisors is required within 90 days. See Table of Contents *"Notice to Respondents."*